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Historical sketch of the synod
of Kentucky, 1802-1902

Edward W.C. Humphrey



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Historical Sketch
of the
Synod of Kentucky

1802-1902



An Address by
Edw. W. C. Humphrey

HISTORICAL SKETCH
OF THE
SYNOD OF KENTUCKY

1802-1902

AN ADDRESS BY
EDW. W. C. HUMPHREY

DELIVERED OCTOBER 14, 1902

AT
LEXINGTON, KY.

BEFORE THE SYNOD OF KENTUCKY
NORTH AND SOUTH

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Synod of Kentucky

1802-1902.

OUR Synod of Kentucky was born in a sea of trouble, in the dark nighttime of a period wherein all that is true and vital in religion seemed about to disappear.

A brave and honest look out over the waters of that stormy sea, and into the hidden recesses of that dark and troubled time, is demanded by the truth, and is the only way whereby we can obtain a clear conception of what our Synod has suffered and endured, has done and accomplished.

The descendants of an old people, from an old world, were drawn into a new country to build up a new commonwealth.

They were called upon to face dangers and hardships with that unfaltering courage and tenacity which has time and again brought into life, a vigorous and springing life, some of the greatest qualities which have ever been bestowed upon the children of men.

But the way was long and hard, the struggle fierce and bloody. Passions aroused by a protracted contest with veteran soldiers of England and the cruel red men of the forest were to be followed and intensified by the strife of political parties, and a huge tide of evils engendered by the French Revolution.

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Among that people, along the Atlantic Seaboard, in the closing years of that tremendous conflict, rumors began to spread themselves abroad that in the West, beyond the mountains, there existed a garden; almost a Garden of Eden; almost a Paradise of God.

Our historian (Davidson) tells us:

“The first explorers of Kentucky spread everywhere, on their return, the most glowing accounts of what they had seen. The luxuriance of the soil; the salubrity of the climate; the dimpled and undulating face of the country; the tall, waving cane and native clover; the magnificent groves of sugar-tree and walnut; the countless herds of buffalo and elk; the pure and limpid brooks; the deep channeled rivers, sweeping between precipitous cliffs of limestone; the air, loaded with fragrance; the groves, resonant with melody.”

Among the publications of The Filson Club there is a charming book entitled “The Wilderness Road,” wherein Mr. Thos. Speed gives an account of the immigration which poured into Kentucky in the evening hours of the eighteenth century, and in the morning watch of the nineteenth; together with a full description of the routes along which the human rivers ran.

That immigration, when its history is made known, will appear more like romance than reality; for unparalleled it remains to this day, in spite of all the wonderful things which we have witnessed in this our wonderful land.

Daniel Boone made his first journey of exploration into Kentucky in 1769. In 1775 he moved his own and five other families thither.

In 1783 the population numbered 12,000 settlers; in 1784, 20,000; in 1790, 73,000; in 1800, 210,000; and by 1820, 565,000 souls had found a home amid the forests and by the rivers of that delightful region.

And thus, over all dangers, difficulties, trials, and hardships, the human tide flowed on.

Originally a part of Fincastle County, Virginia, the "Region" of Kentucky, was set apart as a separate county called Kentucky, in 1775; and as a "District," with three counties: Jefferson, Lincoln and Fayette, in 1780; and was admitted into the Union as a sovereign State on the 1st of June 1792, only nine years after the close of our American Revolution.

We can well believe that the early pioneers were astonished with a great astonishment when they beheld such floods of immigration pouring along the "Wilderness Road," on down the mighty current of the Ohio. To them

More wonderful it seemed
Than all the golden visions
Of all their golden dreams.

But like the Israelites of old, the immigrant passed through a great and terrible wilderness, a savage and relentless foe awaited him at his journey's end, and many eventful, and sometimes disastrous, years must pass by before that immigrant

host could enjoy the land which they had won, ere they could

Lie down in the green meadows
And by the side of the waters rest.

The heart of the Bluegrass region lay 500 miles, as the crow flies, from the seacoast, and fully 300 miles from the crest of the Allegheny Mountains. In what is now West Virginia and Eastern Kentucky existed a tangled wilderness of hills and streams; a barrier which no one could cross, a region covered all over "as the waters cover the sea," with "never ending stretches of gloomy woodland."

President Roosevelt, in a delightful book entitled "The Winning of the West," thus describes that gloomy woodland:

"It was not an open forest. The underbrush grew dense and rank, making a cover so thick that it was in many places impenetrable; so thick that it nowhere gave a chance for human eye to see as far as a bow could carry. . . . Here and there it was broken by a hillside glade, or by a meadow in a stream valley; but elsewhere a man might travel for weeks as if in a perpetual twilight, never once able to see the sun through the interlacing twigs that formed a dark canopy over his head."

Now, as the great rivers of water, on their way to the sea, when thrown back by the mountains, must run along the valleys to find a gap where they can break through the ranges, so these streams of human life, longing for and striving to reach that far-famed region in the West, were forced to run

around that barrier of mountains, far to the south along the Wilderness Road, or down the Ohio River on the north.

The "Old Wilderness Road" began at Philadelphia, thence by York and Lancaster, in Pennsylvania, through Hagerstown, in Maryland; thence clear up the renowned Valley of Virginia, through Staunton, Lexington and Abingdon; thence by way of the Powell Valley through Cumberland Gap to Crab Orchard, in Kentucky. At Crab Orchard the stream divided; one part spread over the "Blue-grass" region; one part pushed on to the Falls of the Ohio; while still another to the southwest, as far down as the Cumberland River. So you see that Middle and West Tennessee was peopled by immigrants from Central Kentucky, who had made their way thither by the Wilderness Road.

After a while the pioneers found a path over the Pennsylvania mountains to Redstone and Pittsburgh, where flatboats were built to carry them down the Ohio. Some planted their settlements at points along the banks of that beautiful river; some passed on into the Region of Kentucky; while others worked their way up the streams which came down from the North—such as the Scioto, the Miami and the Wabash.

But whichever route they followed, the hardships and dangers were exhausting and severe. The river route was, if anything, more dangerous than the trail running through the endless forest.

From an old publication, dated May 10, 1792, we learn that the most direct route from Cincinnati to Philadelphia was by way of Lexington and Crab

Orchard, and thence by the Wilderness Road over the Cumberland Gap, and thence down the long Valley of Virginia.

And so, whether along the Wilderness Road, or down the swift current of the Ohio, "wherever the boatman could follow the winding stream, or the woodman could explore the forest 'shades," the hardy pioneer, battling with Nature and the red Indian, each in their wildest moods, at last found a habitation and a home.

The importance and bearing of these reflections will become abundantly evident as we proceed with this narrative. And it will appear to our Synod in no small degree is due the further fact: "That along the banks of all these rivers, in whatever land they flow, have been founded the hospital, the orphan asylum, the refuge for the insane, the fallen and the helpless, and hard by them all is builded the House of God and the Gates of Heaven."

The movement of people into a new country had never been without a train of evils. But this overwhelming flood of immigration was attended by evils of corresponding magnitude, which told with tremendous force, for a long time, upon the spiritual life and growth, and of course upon the moral and restraining influence of religion. The character of that immigration, as well as the rapidity thereof, exaggerated those difficulties which always confront the church in a new country; and intensified those which were developed by the peculiarities of that extraordinary migration.

Imagine a mighty human tide poured, in a few years, into the dense forest of an uninhabited coun-

try, concerning which Mr. Roosevelt has said: "Up to the door-sills of their log huts stretched the solemn and mysterious forest. There were no openings to break its continuity; nothing but endless leagues on leagues of shadowy, wolf-haunted woodland. The great trees towered aloft till their separate heads were lost in the mass of foliage above . . . The sunlight could not penetrate the roofed archway of murmuring leaves; through the gray aisles of the forest men walked always in a kind of mid-day gloaming."

That human stream far outstripped the means of grace. "The long continued absence of Sabbath services, of the regular ordinances of the church and of its wholesome watch and discipline." The neglect of family worship, and above all of the systematic instruction of the young people in sacred things, fostered a spirit of reckless indifference, and a low state of religious belief and practice, in which the youth "grew up unimbued with religious principle and unaccustomed to moral restraint." (Davidson.)

When the pioneers lost, somewhere along the Wilderness Road, or abandoned in the excitement and danger of border life the faith and teaching of their fathers, of course the next generation grew up in ignorance and unbelief.

And the task which stared our Synod in the face, the day it was born, was to redeem from their evil ways the men of that new generation, lest it should be said of them—the words written in the good old book, in the long, long ago:

"There is evil among all things that are done under the sun . . . the heart of man is full of evil, and madness is in their heart while they live, and after that they go to the dead.

"Their love, their hatred and their envy, is now perished; neither have they any more a portion forever in anything that is done under the sun."

From the point where the Wilderness Road entered Kentucky, at Cumberland Gap, to a point on the Ohio River called Limestone (near where now stands the city of Maysville) extended the renowned "Warrior's Path." This was a trail running through the woods and over the hills—along which the Northern and Southern Indians passed and repassed in their forays against each other. For none of these tribes dwelt in Kentucky, it was a common hunting ground for all, not one had any right or title therein, not one acknowledged the right or title of any save the strongest.

So right upon the threshold of those fair lands, in the region called Kentucky, ran the Warrior's Path, and whosoever crossed that narrow way, entered upon a contest whose annals are stained with deeds of cruelty and blood.

Mr. Roosevelt tells us, in the work from which I have quoted: "There are many dark and bloody pages in the book of border warfare, that grim and iron-bound volume, wherein we read how our fathers won the land we inhabit.

"The Indians were terrible in battle, and cruel beyond all belief in victory. . . . The inhuman love of cruelty for cruelty's sake, which marks the red Indian above all other savages, rendered these

wars more terrible than any others. For the hideous, unnamable, unthinkable tortures practiced by the red man on their captured foes and on their foes' tender women and helpless children are such as we read of in no other struggle. . . . It was inevitable that such deeds should awake in the breasts of the whites the grimmest, wildest spirit of revenge and hatred. And when we consider the excesses committed by the whites, it is only fair to keep in mind the terrible provocations they had endured. Mercy, pity, magnanimity to the fallen could hardly be expected of the frontiersmen gathered together to war against an Indian tribe. Almost every man of such a band had bitter personal wrongs to avenge; he was actuated by a furious flame of hot anger, and goaded by memories of which merely to think was madness."

These eloquent words of Mr. Roosevelt disclose the fact that when the English, Scotch, the Scotch-Irish and the Huguenot; who made up the great bulk of that immigrant host; had once crossed the Warrior's Path, they never faltered; and if they grew stern and hard as they fought the warriors' battle; if at times the candle of their religion grew dim in the socket; nevertheless, they never lost those sterling qualities, or that deep religious conviction, which have throughout the world made their work, their deeds and their fame enduring and immortal.

But we must dwell for a while upon two other dangers which hung like a dark cloud over our Synod.

To the demoralizing influence of border warfare must be added a universal spirit of cupidity and avarice, engendered by the inflow of capital and wild speculation in these Western lands. The prodigality and recklessness of the land office produced an avalanche of litigation, feuds and heart-burnings which lasted for a generation. It created an irresistible passion for excitement; it retarded the religious growth of the people; it gave rise to an atmosphere which enveloped the whole community in its deadly folds.

Evils such as these would soon have run their course and passed away, had not another supervened, peculiarly fitted to poison an atmosphere already charged with elements which steel the human heart against the pleading of conscience and the requirement of religion. I refer to the introduction and spread of that abandoned type of infidelity and materialism engendered and spread far and wide by the French Revolution. It was but natural that the American people should have accorded a most enthusiastic support to that revolution in its opening stages, and before its wild excesses developed its true character, and before suffering and disaster accumulated, such as call to mind that old prophecy in Deuteronomy: "The Lord shall send upon thee cursing, vexation and rebuke, in all that thou settest thine hand unto for to do. The Lord shall smite thee with a consumption, and with a fever, and with an inflammation, and with an extreme burning, and with the sword, and with blasting and mildew, and they shall pursue thee until thou perish."

Does it not seem anomalous that among the colonists on the seaboard, the men of 1776, with all their strong traits of character and intellect, their power to detect and separate the true from the false—that in soil in such as that the most offensive and radical type of infidelity ever known should have taken root and grown and flourished?

But there is nothing anomalous in the fact that it should have been carried unto the wilderness, and there found a dwelling-place among a generation of men upon whom the ties of religion hung loose and easy.

And, like a quick and powerful poison, it went springing through the arteries and came back again through the veins, loaded with moral corruption and spiritual death.

There is a proverb as old as the everlasting hills that "what a man believes that will he do." In proportion as a man abandons his faith in God his moral nature becomes enfeebled and corrupt; and vice and dissipation will reveal the thoughts and intents of the heart.

Nor is this all, the leaven of those opinions, like the tares sown in the wheat, produced a harvest of errors, errors old and new; errors far-reaching and vital in character; errors in doctrine and frequent lapses in faith and practice; not only among professing Christians, but even in the little company of ministers.

But David Rice, who like a monarch of the forest towered far above his fellows, gathered around him a band of true men, to detect and grapple with those errors in every form; and when

the time came to strike they struck quick and hard. Davidson tells us that at one time or other nearly one-half of the ministers were subjected to church censures more or less severe, some rebuked, some suspended and others deposed.

The tide soon began to turn. An order of men appeared, far different from those who came in that feverish rush over the "Wilderness Road"; men who in ability, learning and spiritual power gave to our Kentucky ministry an influence and standing which it has never lost.

But how has it happened that the history of our Synod, in the first half-century of its existence, is so full of dissensions and divisions? Due in part to the causes which I have mentioned, but mainly to the truculent and combative character of the people themselves. An intense individuality, a spirit of defiant self-reliance, the wild freedom of the hunter's life, the dangers and cruelty of border warfare, the isolation and loneliness of their lives generated an intolerance, a combativeness, a self-assertion intensified by certain hereditary tendencies among a people whose ancestors were renowned for what I shall call firmness. True, they accorded great respect to the opinions of other people so long as those opinions coincided with their own. And in matters of importance, and especially in matters of religion, what they considered a sanctified firmness governed the actions and thoughts of those men.

Do not think that this narrative is overdrawn or that the shadows in the picture have been painted in colors of too dark a hue. It rests upon

the testimony of men like David Rice, who knew but too well how dark were the troubled waters of the stormy sea upon which our Synod was launched on the 14th of October, 1802. But in that tempestuous sea there were undercurrents, deep and strong, in the native character and disposition of the people: courage, endurance, sagacity, and deep religious convictions. And the subsequent history of our State and our Synod gave abundant evidence that in 1802 these undercurrents were sleeping, not dead.

As the Synod of Virginia, with an eye single to the greatness of the "Western Country," enlarged its boundaries from time to time to include mountains, plains, rivers and forests, so the Synod of Virginia extended its jurisdiction over the ever-widening limits of the State. Into that Western country the minister followed hard after the hunter and the pioneer; and as the towns and cities were built, from the tall chimney of the factory it was but a little distance to the tapering spire of the church.

In 1786 there were four Presbyteries within the bounds of the Synod of Virginia:

Redstone, embracing the settlements in Western Pennsylvania; Hanover, which covered Eastern Virginia, *i. e.*, the country lying east of the Blue Ridge; Lexington, which extended up the Valley of Virginia, and into what is now West Virginia; Transylvania, which included the region called Kentucky, the settlements on the Cumberland River and its tributaries, and, by a subsequent Act of that

Synod, the settlements on the Miami and Scioto, north of the Ohio River.

At no point within fifty miles could any one have located the bounds of the Transylvania Presbytery. Those who suppose that this Presbytery or its successor, the Synod of Kentucky, had any fixed or natural boundaries, are greatly mistaken. for in after years the limits of the Synod were extended north, south and west, far out into the great unknown.

This Presbytery (Transylvania) was organized on the 17th of October, 1786, at Danville, and by a subsequent Act of the Synod of Virginia it was divided into three: •

West Lexington, (so called to distinguish it from the old Lexington Presbytery in Virginia) embraced Central Kentucky; Washington, located on both sides of the Ohio, in North and Northeast; Transylvania, a vast territory in Western Kentucky and Middle Tennessee.

Now let us look at the *expansion* of our Synod. First a Presbytery was formed called "Miami," located on the north bank of the Ohio, "embracing all the territory lying west of a line drawn north from the mouth of the Licking River."

On the 22d of May, 1817, our General Assembly ordered that so much of the Synod of Ohio, within the State of Indiana, as lies west of a line drawn north from the Kentucky River, be attached to the Synod of Kentucky. In October, 1817, our Synod formed a new Presbytery called "Louisville," bounded as follows: On the north by a line drawn from McCoun's Ferry on the Kentucky River, thence

with a line leading to Bardstown to where it crosses the Salt River, thence along that river to the Ohio, thence with the Ohio to the mouth of the Wabash, thence north *indefinitely*.

In 1816 our Synod ordered that the jurisdiction of the West Tennessee Presbytery be considered as extending across the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers—*indefinitely*, containing a part of the Missouri Territory.

By another Act of the Synod certain vacant churches in the Illinois Territory were attached to the Presbytery of Muhlenburg.

And finally a new territory was formed by the Synod, having for its eastern boundary the Pedito River, thence in a direct line to Fort Jackson at the junction of the Coosa and Tallapoosa Rivers, thence along lines which extended that new territory across what is now the State of Alabama clear down into Florida.

So you see that our Synod when it undertook to extend its ecclesiastical jurisdiction, did nothing by halves or in a small way. Whatever might lie beyond its sight or its ken, it took anyhow, wherever it was, whatever it might be. Clearly it wanted the earth and meant to have it. The wide extent of the bounds of the Synod of Virginia, the dangers and hardships experienced by delegates from remote churches and settlements, led that body to petition the General Assembly for a division. Accordingly the General Assembly in session at Philadelphia, on April 28, 1802, Resolved—

That the Presbyteries of Hanover, Lexington and Winchester constitute a Synod, to be known

as the Synod of Virginia. That the Presbyteries of Redstone, Ohio and Erie be constituted a Synod, to be known as the Synod of Pittsburg.

That the Presbyteries of Transylvania, West Lexington and Washington, constitute a Synod to be known as the Synod of Kentucky.

Under this order our Synod was organized at Lexington on the 14th of October, 1802. Rev. David Rice as Moderator and Robert Marshall as Clerk.

Thirty members were enrolled—seventeen ministers and thirteen elders—whole number of ministers thirty-seven. Out of the nineteen ministers attached to Transylvania Presbytery, fourteen were absent—the first cloud above the horizon in the great Cumberland controversy.

To other speakers on this occasion you have assigned certain branches of my subject :

To one, the Origin and History of the Cumberland Church;

To another, Evangelism and the great revivals which have been vouchsafed to us;

To yet another, Education, the beginning and growth of our Colleges and Seminaries

The great revival of 1800 can be considered by me only so far as it touched—with a tongue of fire—the subsequent history of our Synod.

Our historian has said: "Unlike the still, small voice, on the softly flowing waters of Siloa, the great revival of 1800 rather resembled the whirlwind, the earthquake, the impetuous torrent, whose track was marked by violence and desolation."

To these words I would add that the effects of that violence and desolation have lasted down to our own time.

In 1802 the impetuous torrents, started by the whirlwind and the earthquake, had begun to flow in all their strength.

In Central Kentucky, particularly, crowds of men and women, half crazed by religious excitement, were running into the vagaries of the "New Light" schism, or were rushing into the extravagances of Shaker mysticism. While down in the "Green River Country" a far more formidable movement was slowly maturing, which resulted in the formation of what we now call the Cumberland Church.

As I must abjure altogether the Cumberland controversy, I now invite your attention to that New Light schism, which so grievously disturbed and crippled our Synod in the morning of its existence.

It is a curious thing, that, when men are pushed hard in religious controversy, when they can find no authority for their peculiar views in Scripture, in the Creed, or in the polity of the Church, that then they begin to have dreams and visions. "New Light" breaks in upon them. That "New Light" never fails to come just at the time when they need it most; and it never fails to teach and reveal exactly those things for which they have been contending. And to the men of that New Light Party, dreams and visions came in sufficient frequency and abundance to constrain them to do all of those

things which they had already determined should be done.

Whenever we hear a man talking about the demands of modern life and scholarship, which are sure to compel us to abandon all creeds and confessions, and to come down to the bed rock of Christianity, we may be very certain that the bed rock will be composed of just such materials as the exigencies of their theories or the trend of their opinions may require.

Let me know what such men want to believe, and I will undertake to fix that bed rock to suit them inside of ten minutes.

The accounts which have come down to us of the disorders and vagaries which have accompanied and followed the great revival of 1800 are such that, if not well attested, we would pronounce them incredible.

One witness thus described a camp meeting held at Cane Ridge, in Bourbon County. "The noise was like that of Niagara. The tide of emotion seemed to move over them like tumultuous waves. Sometimes hundreds were swept down almost at once, 'like trees of the forest under the blast of the wild tornado.' Seven ministers, some in wagons, others standing on stumps, might have been counted at once, all addressing the multitude at the same time. Of the people some were singing, others praying, others crying aloud for mercy; while hardened men, who with horrid imprecations rushed furiously into the praying circles, were smitten down as if by an invisible hand, and lay powerless or racked by fearful spasms, till their

companions beholding them were palsied by terror. At times the scene was surpassingly terrible, the boldest hearts were unmanned."

"At one time," said a spectator, "I saw at least five hundred swept down in a moment, as if a thousand guns had opened upon them; and then immediately followed shrieks and shouts that rent the very heavens.

"As darkness settled down over the scene, new features of terror presented themselves to the beholder. The camp fires gleamed with a strange light. Hundreds of candles and lamps suspended from the over-arching trees, with torches in every direction lighting up with strange brilliancy the motley groups beneath and the tremulous foliage above, gave to the whole panorama the aspect of wild enchantment; while chanted hymns, impassioned exhortations and earnest prayers, interrupted by sobs and shrieks and shouts and startling cries for mercy, deepened the impression made upon the beholder. The feeling became intense, the excitement indescribable and beyond control."

Another witness described the people, "praying, shouting, jerking, barking, dreaming, prophesying, and looking as through a glass at the infinite glories of Zion just about to break up the world."

Such disorders in conduct are always accompanied by wild extravagancies in faith and doctrine; the most fundamental truths of religion are questioned, denied and at last repudiated. Every one becomes a law unto himself—guided by dreams and visions.

As the popular feeling in favor of such scenes amounted to a passion, it required courage and wisdom of the highest order to stem that torrent of "mad enthusiasm which swept over the entire territory of the Synod, threatening a subversion of truth and order."

But there were men in the Synod equal to the occasion and gifted with those qualities which the crisis demanded. At its second meeting in 1803, the Synod boldly grappled with the danger and called to its bar the leaders in what men chose to call the "revival movement." It took up a petition signed by eighty church members, which in the Presbytery of Washington had been cast under the table with every mark of contempt. A petition which seriously inculcated the erroneous teaching of certain men. And after a full and careful consideration the Synod proceeded to suspend from the Gospel ministry not less than five out of its little band of thirty-seven ministers. Barton W. Stone, Robt. Marshall, Richard McNemar, Jno. Thompson, and Jno. Dunlary. And in October, 1805, another, Matthew Houston, was tried and deposed from his office as a minister.

To deal with the people, among whom Stone and his companions labored with sleepless activity, and among whom this pernicious teaching spread like wildfire, was no easy matter. But "Father" Rice and a small band of men who stood behind him never faltered; going about among the people, appealing to their strong sense and better reason, explaining and expounding the tenets of a sound doctrine and a pure religion, and circulating

copies of Atkins' edition of The Westminster Confession of Faith.

But at last it was the revival leaders themselves who gave the conservative men a chance to put in staggering and fatal blows.

The five suspended ministers associated themselves into The Presbytery of Springfield and put forth an "Apology." A few months afterwards, when that august body gave up the ghost, "The Last Will and Testament" thereof was given to the public, and added to it "The Witnesses' Address." In these three documents, in cold, hard print, the most damaging facts were unmistakably revealed: That these men and their deluded and almost insane followers were drifting away from the old land marks, deviating from the right more and more, "launching out upon an uncertain sea of experiment, and falling at last into the wildest speculation, repudiating some of the most vital doctrines of our confession, and maintaining that all creeds should be abolished.

The Synod published a "circular letter" from the pen of the Rev. John Lyle, and subsequently "An Address to the Churches"; wherein the vagaries and tendencies of the New Light Movement were exposed with convincing logic and merciless severity.

Of these men Barton W. Stone alone stood to his guns, and fought the battle to a finish. Richard McNemar and John Dunlary, to his unspeakable wrath and indignation, deserted him for the Society of the Shakers; and in 1811, to his deep mortification, Robert Marshall and John Thompson, frankly

confessing and unequivocally recanting their errors, were received back into the Synod.

Stone published a number of "Letters on the Atonement," which raised up against him a redoubtable antagonist in Rev. John P. Campbell, who in a series of letters stripped off all the disguises which Stone had assumed, and "showed him up" as nothing better than a rank Unitarian; and compelled him to publicly retract and "eat up" some of the dreadful words which he had used.

This Stoneite Party began to crumble, and would have passed away had not an abler man appeared on the scene.

Alexander Campbell was a remarkable man. His great debate with Nathan L. Rice, which began at Lexington on the 15th of November, 1843, in the presence of a great concourse of people, and lasted three weeks, is one of the most notable events in the religious history of our State. Into the organization made by him the New Light Party was absorbed, and thus its historical influence and importance has been perpetuated.

But still another season of trial was to come upon the Synod. Like a piece of sound timber cut out of an oak, it must be tried and seasoned before it could be fitted and jointed into the place appointed for it. The last war with Great Britain, called by us the War of 1812, brought into being a long list of evils, intensified other evils already in existence, and for a time paralyzed the spiritual life of our people. Whatever the British commander in the West, General Procter, may have lacked in ability he made up in cruelty; and whatever he

lacked in either was more than made up by the consummate skill and unbounded ferocity of Tecumseh, by far the greatest Indian chief which it has ever been the misfortune of our Kentucky men to encounter. By him a vast conspiracy was formed; scattered tribes drawn together into one confederacy, and the flames of a most destructive contest lighted up the whole of what was then our Western sky. The massacre on the River Raisin, a desperate struggle at Fort Meigs, where out of 800 men, under Colonel Dudley, only 150 escaped, were the fell disasters of a conflict which terminated in a battle on the Thames, in Canada, where Tecumseh and his horde of savages received at the hands of a Kentucky regiment, led by Richard M. Johnson, what some one (concerning another more terrible event) called "a crowning mercy."

The demoralizing influence of war is always felt in many ways, in many directions, but the magnitude of the consequences of this one, coming upon a new people, in a new country, can hardly be estimated. Like a drenching rain which covers the earth and reaches far down into the soil, the evil results permeated our social, political, and religious life. There was already enough venom and hatred between the old Federal and Democratic Parties, but the issues made by the War of 1812 drew the lines so sharp that men would not tolerate even in the pulpit a minister whose political opinions differed from their own, and so political animosity inflamed the fires of religious strife, and, to crown it all, just at this time the church was tormented by a virulent outbreak of unbelief and skepticism. In

that remarkable book, "The Cause and Cure of Infidelity," by David Nelson, we are told that "pocket volumes of false statements, infidel manuals, and painted perversions of history, are spreading profusely, while opposite publications are growing more rare." Now, in an age when books were few and costly, who can measure the disastrous results produced by these pocket editions scattered far and wide. No wonder that Nelson denounced in such vigorous language, not only the vices, but the ignorance of his time, and that he proclaimed as one of the cures of infidelity a dissemination of accurate information and religious knowledge.

The great division of our Church into the Old and New School Parties, which took place in 1837, need not detain us, because with but few exceptions Kentucky Presbyterians adhered to the Old School Party.

Your committee, by an act of singular good nature, have turned over to me three burning questions: the institution of slavery; the Civil War; and the division of our old Synod in 1866—and around them all the air is charged with electricity, and dynamite is lying about in chunks as big as a bushel; but fortunately, that dynamite has, in these latter years, lost a large part of its explosive power.

The institution of slavery perished in the deluge of our Civil War; there were great evils and serious responsibilities connected with it, as we all admit, and now not one of us would bring it back from the dead even if he could. Moreover, the attitude of our Synod towards that institution has always been characterized by moderation and conservatism.

Gradual emancipation, coupled perhaps with compensation, would have been received with favor as the best solution of that most dangerous and complicated problem.

But what shall I say concerning that unhappy division of the old Synod which took place in 1866. Every man who passed through the trying scenes of some momentous historic event, must look back upon it from the standpoint of his own predilections and opinions. Views very different could be obtained of that charming Luray or Page Valley in Virginia; as the spectator might take his stand on the Massanuttin Range on the one side, or the top of the Blue Ridge on the other. Our Synod was divided then and it remains divided still. And we can not hide the fact that even now, after the lapse of thirty-six years, we continue to view the landscape from situations wide apart.

So it seems hardly fit and becoming, or in keeping with the spirit of this occasion, to undertake any narration thereof. But who will question the assertion that it was a terrible misfortune coming at the time, and the way it did. For the controversy which immediately produced that division came at a time when the minds of men were flaming hot with the antagonisms produced by civil war. *Inter arma silent leges*; and even after the contest is over, it takes a long time for overheated blood to cool down, and for men to pass beyond the scorching fires of civil strife.

The plowshare ran through our Synod, our congregations, our families; life-long friends were parted

asunder, some to become reconciled in after years, some never could be.

Will you pardon a personal reminiscence? In my early days I formed a friendship with two of the young members of a certain family; a friendship which cast a soft light all through those years of alienation and division; and to-day the memory thereof brings to me a most pleasing reflection, that, Stuart Robinson and Edward P. Humphrey were reconciled ere they passed over the river of death, to meet each other again on the banks of that river of life which flows by the Throne of God.

Two Presbyterian Churches in the same State, among the same people, alike in doctrine and polity, alike in customs and traditions, must always be, in some measure at least, a hindrance to each other. But we can look back into the thirty-six years of our divided life, and we can sincerely rejoice that in the latter years the bitterness engendered by that division has been quietly and surely passing away. And as we unite in this celebration of the 100th anniversary of our old mother Synod, shall we not unite (as far as two separate churches can) in a united effort to build up our numbers and our influence in the commonwealth wherein we dwell? For one, I find a double cause for rejoicing in the consolidation, now so happily consummated, of our Colleges and Seminaries; and in the fact that thus far at least we realize the wisdom of that motto on Kentucky's coat of arms, "United we Stand, Divided we Fall."

Would that I had the time to speak of that long list of heroes who stood in the forefront of our

Synod's life. Ministers like David and Nathan L. Rice, David and Samuel K. Nelson, Robert J. and William L. Breckenridge, Jno. C. Young and Lewis Warner Green, Stuart Robinson, Rutherford Douglas and Edward P. Humphrey. These men, widely as they differed from each other, were grandly endowed with some of the noblest qualities which our Father has ever conferred upon His children. They were mighty in the Scriptures, great in controversy, in eloquence divine. At home in metaphysical and polemic theology, sparkling in wit and genius. In that long list are to be found, men of clear thought and sound scholarship, debaters and parliamentarians of uncommon power, the loving pastor, the instructive teacher, the genial companion, the faithful friend. Oh, the work they did, the suffering they endured, the priceless legacy of renown which they transmitted unto us. Upon an occasion similar to this it was said by one of those men: "The glory of the children are their fathers. Our glory is that our fathers of the first generation lighted up the dark woods of Kentucky with the lamp of life; and the fathers of the second and third generations have handed down to us the light brightly burning. They call upon us to pass it on all ablaze to our children until the whole land is filled with light and warmth."

And then the long and splendid list of Ruling Elders. Men like Ormond Beatty, James Barbour and David R. Murray, Glass Marshall, Mark Hardin and Samuel Cassedy. Men who stood in their day and generation like strong towers which could not be shaken; some lived in public life and did a

deal for their fellowmen; and some along the peaceful "vale of life kept the noiseless tenor of their way," and the memory of what they did, and what they were, is slipping gently and quietly away out of the recollection of men.

When we read of the lives of men such as these, "we pray for a lingering sunset, even though we are sure that the following sunrise shall be yet more glorious." Nor must I forget to mention the faithful service of S. S. McRoberts, for forty-three years the stated clerk of the Synod.

But at last, said a gifted editor, writing upon the death of Charles Dickens:

"It is impossible to write as the heart would write. The shadows grow thick and importunate, bringing back old joys and hopes and griefs and disappointments and longings . . . We lay the pen aside—it can do justice neither to the genius of the dead nor the sorrow of the living. It can make but a poor dumb show of words, that do not half the tribute which is paid by the unconscious rose, the reedy thistle, the silent sunshine, and the idle stream."

At one point or another throughout our State these men are sleeping

"Under the sod and the dew
Waiting the Judgment Day.

"So, when the summer calleth,
On forest and field of grain
With an equal murmur falleth
The cooling drip of the rain.

“So, with an equal splendor
The morning sun-rays fall,
With a touch, impartially tender
On the blossoms blooming for all.”

This sketch has accomplished but little if it has not revealed the story of a Synod, which, like an oak planted in the soil of adversity, has been tested and strengthened in the storm and the tempest; an oak whose roots extend down deep, whose branches spread far and wide, and in which the sap runs strong and good. It has grown among a people whose natural qualities, if for a time were obscured, had in them the ring of metal sound and true.

A commonwealth built up as if by magic, in a region which had been so long that the memory of man ran not to the contrary, the battle-ground and the hunting-field of savage tribes who lived to the north and the south of it, of these tribes not one ever had a dwelling therein, or any right or title thereto. This region lay a long distance from the haunts of civilized men—an oasis of singular beauty and fertility far out in the West, isolated by a broad tract of mountain country from the settlements in the East. It was peopled not slowly and gradually, but all at once, in a few years, by a grand rush of emigration over the Wilderness Road. That commonwealth thus planted in the heart of a great wilderness, was destined to become a center, from which should flow streams of political and religious life; a type of civil freedom and government, which, if strenuous and combative, was adapted to that people and the work set

before them; a type of religious faith and practice; the iron of Calvinism in its blood, and in every fibre the elixir of a religion pure and undefiled before God.

It is a fact but dimly realized that the great Synods around and about us, have sprung directly or indirectly from these two Synods, which in origin, in faith and in renown are one, only one.

On the 24th of May, 1814, by order of our General Assembly, the Presbytery of Lancaster was detached from the Synod of Pittsburg; the Presbyteries of Washington and Miami from that of Kentucky; and were formed into the Synod of Ohio, which held its first meeting at Chillicothe in October, 1814.

On the 21st of May, 1817, the Presbyteries of West Tennessee, Union, Shiloh and Mississippi, were detached from the Synod of Kentucky, and formed into a new Synod called Tennessee, which held its first meeting at Nashville in October, 1817.

That Presbytery called Mississippi, which was created by our Synod, expanded until in 1829 it became the Synod of that name.

In 1823 our Synod formed a new Presbytery called Salem, on the north bank of the Ohio opposite the present city of Louisville; which grew so fast that in October, 1826, the Synod of Indiana held its first meeting at Vincennes.

And finally a Presbytery called Missouri, extending across Southern Illinois beyond the Mississippi River, formed the nucleus around which gathered in after years the Synods of Illinois and Missouri.

So look to the North and the South, and see how great and stalwart are your children.

In 1809 the Synod of Kentucky contained forty-one ministers and 1,313 members.

In 1902 our two Synods taken together contain 177 ministers, 273 churches and 28,320 members, whereof two-thirds are in the Southern Synod.

And we form a part of two powerful General Assemblies, which taken together contain 10,765 churches, 9,118 ministers, 38,068 ruling elders, 1,275,000 members, and our contributions for the last year reached the royal sum of \$19,307,740.

And looking onward into the future let us conclude with those wonderful words of John Ruskin:

“God doth set His bow in the cloud, and thus renews, in the sound of every falling drop of rain, His promise of everlasting love And these passings to and fro of fruitful showers and grateful shade, . . . and voices of moaning winds and threatening thunders, . . . are but to deepen in our hearts the acceptance and distinctness and clearness of the words ‘Our Father which art in Heaven.’”

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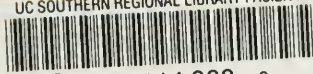
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